

The Massachusetts Department of Public Health, Forensic Drug Laboratory is pleased to report significant progress in this grant period January 1- December 30, 2010 towards meeting the objectives of the Coverdell Forensic Science Improvement Grants Program:

- *improving the quality and timeliness of forensic science*
- *eliminating the backlog of controlled substances awaiting testing and*
- *training, assisting and employing forensic laboratory personnel*

In this grant period, both the sample turn around time and the backlog of evidence awaiting analysis were substantially reduced. As seen in Table 1, the laboratory achieved an 86 day reduction in laboratory turn around time and a 6336 sample decrease in the backlog. A sizeable portion of this improvement was directly attributable to Coverdell funding as the money was used to fund a chemist, provide overtime to analytical staff and to fund training and supplies.

The laboratory hired analytical chemist, Stacey Desjardins (Feiden), who has a graduate degree in forensic science from the University of New Haven, and BS in chemistry from Monmouth College. She gained valuable practical experience while interning at the New Hampshire State Crime Laboratory. As the result of her training and experience, she was well prepared for forensic drug testing. In this abbreviated time period January 1- December 30, 2010, Ms. Desjardins analyzed 979 samples of varying complexity including powders, vegetable matter and pharmaceuticals. Vacancy savings from Ms. Desjardins' position were used to fund overtime for all interested chemists. As such, an additional 927 samples were eliminated from the backlog.

Ms. Desjardins and another chemist (Lisa Glazer) from the Drug Laboratory attended a five-day intensive workshop offered by the Drug Enforcement Authority for forensic scientists involved in the analysis of controlled substances. This training provided insight into emerging drug use trends as well as theoretical and hands on training for testing controlled substances. Information from this training is being used to evaluate and update laboratory protocols and procedures with the emphasis on quality, efficiency and timeliness of analytical testing.

Table. 1 - Coverdell Grant Progress Report Metrics January 1- December 30, 2010

<i>Number of days between submission of a sample to the DPH Drug Laboratory & delivery of test results (beginning of grant period)</i>	156
<i>Number of days between submission of a sample to the DPH Drug Laboratory and delivery of test results (end of the grant period)</i>	70
<i>Change in number of days between submission of a sample to the DPH Drug laboratory & delivery of test results in this grant period</i>	- 86
<i>Number of backlogged samples at the beginning of the grant period</i>	10321
<i>Number of backlogged samples at the end of this grant period</i>	3985
<i>Reduction in backlogged samples during the grant period</i>	6336
<i>Number of backlogged samples analyzed with Coverdell funding during this grant period</i>	1906
<i>Number of forensic science personnel attending training in this reporting period</i>	2
<i>Number of medical examiner personnel attending training</i>	N/A